Smart card technology under APREG

1376. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the successful disbursement of payment under Andhra Pradesh Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and Social Security Pension Scheme in Warangal and Karimnagar districts using Smart Card technology has promoted the Government to reach to 8 more districts in future;

(b) whether a whoopping 30 lakh rural people will benefit from this Smart Card technology that AIMS has providing delivery of banking services at affordable cost to the low income groups;

(c) whether Rural Development Department has entered into partnership agreement with the nationalized banks for the Smart Card Technology; and

(d) to what extent this scheme is benefiting the poor people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) Government of Andhra Pradesh is proposing to take up the scheme in all districts of the State in a phased manner. In phase-I, 6 districts will be taken up and it is proposed to operationalise in these districts in about 1 year.

(b) In the up scaled phase, the Government of Andhra Pradesh is proposing to take up 2 schemes *i.e.* NREGA and SSP to begin with for the disbursement through smart card technology. About 1 crore people will be benefited by the smart card technology in the entire state under NREGS and SSPs.

(c) Yes, Sir. The Rural Development Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the nationalised banks for the smart card technology.

(d) Disbursement through smart card is a branchless banking model and major step towards financial inclusion. The project envisages delivery of service at village level. Beneficiaries will be saved travelling time and at the same time they can expect payments in time.

Misappropriation of money in Chhattisgarh under NREGP

1377. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) how much money has been sanctioned to the State of Chhattisgarh under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme;

(b) how much money has been utilized by the State along with the details of projects thereof;

(c) whether some officials have been suspended in the State for misappropriation of NREGS money; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by Ministry in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) During 2006-07, the total central release to the State of Chhattisgarh under NREGA was Rs. 71850.74 lakhs and during current financial year (upto January, 2008) the total central release is Rs. 108623.60 lakhs.

(b) During 2006-07, the cumulative expenditure was Rs. 66882.16 lakhs and during current financial year (upto January, 2008), the cumulative expenditure is Rs. 94721.42 lakhs. A total of 32463 number of works were taken up during 2006-07 and a total of 65630 number of works have been taken up during 2007-08 (upto January, 2008).

(c) and (d) There were complaints regarding alleged purchase of pesticides and fertilizers from NREGA funds in Kanker district. The matter was taken up with the State Government

of Chhattisgarh and the matter was enquired by the Employment Guarantee Commissioner, Chhattisgarh. The inquiry report has been received from the State Government informing that the Collector, Kanker, has been removed and the concerned CEO, Zilla Panchayat has been suspended. The Chief Executive Officers of the Block Panchayats in which pesticides and fertilizers were purchased from NREGS funds, Deputy Director, Agriculture, who gave technical sanction by including "land treatment" under "land development" and one APO of the Zilla Panchayat have also been suspended. The State Government has also informed that the amount spent on purchase of pesticides and fertilizers in Kanker will not be charged under the NREGA and such expenditure will be booked under other agriculture schemes run by the State Government. The Ministry had also deputed a National Level Monitor to the district to conduct an inquiry. NLM has submitted his report which has been shared with the State Government. The Central Government had also requested the C&AG to conduct an audit in the district.

Wages not paid through bank/post office to rural labourers

†1378. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the rural labourers are not being paid through bank/post office as a result of which they do not get full wages;

(b) whether his Ministry had held discussions with the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Communications in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether any initiative has been taken in the matter at the level of Prime Minister's Office;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the steps being taken by Government to ensure that the rural labourers get full benefit for their hard work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) In order to ensure that the labourers get full wages for the work done by them, NREGA Guidelines provide that wages should be paid in a public place, with muster rolls being read out aloud and displayed at the time of payment. In case, wages are paid through the Bank/Post network, the details of wages paid should be made public. However, payment of wages through Banks/Post offices is not mandatory under the Act.

(b) to (f) Yes, Sir. Payment of wages under NREGA through workers accounts in post offices had been taken up with the Department of Posts. Department of Posts has requested all Heads of Circles to take prompt measures for operationalisation of the accounts of wage earners in the Post Offices. Ministry has issued instructions to State Governments for proper coordination with the Department of Posts. Department of Posts has advised their State Offices to cooperate with the State Government to enable early operationalisation of wage payment through NREGA workers accounts in post offices wherever possible and not to charge service charges.

Audit of remaining 138 districts under NREGS

1379. DR. ABHISHEK MANU SINGHVI:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.